

Self Care In Challenging Times: Care for the Caregiver in the Age of COVID-19

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
Wednesday, July 22, 2020
9:00 – 10:30 a.m. Central Time**

**Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division**

Faculty

**James L. Sacco, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.
Consultant to the
Alabama Department of Public Health**

Goal of the Course

**The goal of this course is to identify
stressors for caregivers in the time of
COVID-19 and associated strategies to
enhance self care.**

Training Objectives

**At the conclusion of this training, participants
will be able to:**

- 1. Name at least three barriers to self-care for health professionals;**
- 2. List at least four stressors unique to COVID-19;**
- 3. Identify options to enhance self care; and**
- 4. Name resiliency traits that can mitigate the effects of trauma.**

COVID-19 Check-In

- 1) How are you doing today? (1-10)**
- 2) One self-care strategy that's helping in this challenging time?**

Issues in Living Through COVID-19

- Grief**
- Anxiety and Fear**
- COVID-19 and Trauma**
- Need for Self-Care**

Grief - Symptoms

- Sadness, despair, helplessness, powerlessness
- Anger, agitation, impatience, loss of control
- Fear, guilt, shame, uncertainty
- Weight loss/weight gain
- Difficulty concentrating

Anxiety - For Self and Others

- Unknown/unpredictable
- Loss of control
- Fear on the FRONT LINE
- Potential FATAL infection

COVID-19 as Trauma

- Fear of unknown and potentially life-threatening condition.
- Given the unknown, we can feel powerless.
- Prolonged heightened anxiety associated with contagion.
Flight/fight response engaged.

COVID-19 as Trauma

- Because of social distancing feeling “trapped” or isolated.
- Uncertainty. You can’t know what to do. No one does.

Most Common Symptoms

- How do you see GRIEF being demonstrated in your clients?
- What signs of ANXIETY do you see?
- What reactions suggest your consumers are experiencing a TRAUMATIC EVENT?

Coping with Grief

- FEEL YOUR FEELINGS!
- Understand that grief is unpredictable and non-linear.
- Accept that your grieving process will be unique to you.
- SEEK SUPPORT from people who care about you.

Coping with Grief

- Develop physical, emotional, and spiritual self-care plans.
- Recognize the difference between grief and depression.

Coping: Cognitive Approaches

- Watch your self-talk. Optimism can be learned.
- Stop scaring yourself.
- Find internal reassurance.
- Create a new outcome in your head.
- Change the channel – in your mind, in your relationships, on your television.

Coping: Behavioral Approaches

- Social distancing is NOT social isolation.
- Savor helping others.
- Exercise. Diet. Deep breathing.
- Avoid over-indulging (sex, alcohol, shopping, gaming, etc.)

Coping: Behavioral Approaches

- Improve your sleep hygiene.
- Manage the news.

Surviving Trauma: Resiliency Factors

- Social support/connectedness
- Action-oriented coping style
- Self-efficacy/sense of mastery
- Purpose in life/spiritual life
- Talking about the experience and feelings
- Seeking help

Questions?

Comments?

Unique Issues in the HIV Service Arena

- **Stigma of HIV**
 - Fears and Contagion
 - Shame
 - Isolation
- **GRIEF and HIV – emotional reaction to LOSS**

Unique Issues in the HIV Service Arena

- **HIV and Trauma**
 - Prevalence of trauma before HIV
 - HIV diagnosis as traumatic
 - Secondary trauma among peers and professionals

Community Voices

- How can we support the long-time survivors among us who in some cases are starting to encounter PTSD like feelings from the early days of the epidemic?
- I am living w/HIV + COVID19. it has been horrible. I did not think I was at risk until I got sick. Can you all please address more stigma?
- I am a LTS. I am deeply concerned. How do we as LTS make it through? It is double the stigma.

Secondary Trauma - Definition

Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. For helping professionals...the essential act of listening to trauma stories may take an emotional toll that compromises professional functioning and diminishes quality of life.

-National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Physical Signs of Secondary Trauma

- Exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Sore back and neck
- Irritable bowel, GI distress

Physical Signs of Secondary Trauma

- Rashes, breakouts
- Grinding your teeth at night
- Heart palpitations

Emotional Signs of Secondary Trauma

- Emotional exhaustion
- Negative self-image (Guilt, Shame, Avoidance)
- Depression/Increased anxiety/Hopelessness
- Reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- Resentment of demands being put on you at work and/or at home

Emotional Signs of Secondary Trauma

- Dread of working with certain clients/patients/certain case files
- Diminished sense of enjoyment/career
- Hypersensitivity to emotionally charged stimuli
- Insensitivity to emotional material/numbing
- Difficulty separating personal and professional lives

Behavioral Signs of Secondary Trauma

- Increased use of alcohol and drugs, food, sex, etc.
- Anger and Irritability at home and/or at work
- Watching excessive amounts of TV/Netflix at night
- Isolating at home
- Isolating/avoiding work tasks.

Behavioral Signs of Secondary Trauma

- Impaired ability to make decisions/feeling helpless
- Impostor syndrome – feeling unskilled in your job
- Problems in personal relationships
- Thinking about quitting your job (not always a bad idea by the way!)
- Engaging in frequent negative gossip/venting at work

Prioritizing Self-Care

- Pre-morbid conditions?
- How severe current stress is?
- What is the impact of the current level of stress?
- Who can help?

Self-Care Basics: Barriers

CLIENT	SYSTEM	INTERNAL
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*

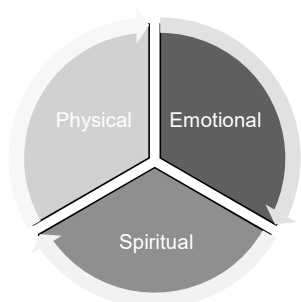
Self-Care Basics: Do Your Work

- Impact of your history
- Take off your leotard and red cape!
Allow emotion, admit vulnerability,
lean on people
- Assess and understand “Caregiver
Fatigue”

Self-Care Basics: Do Your Work

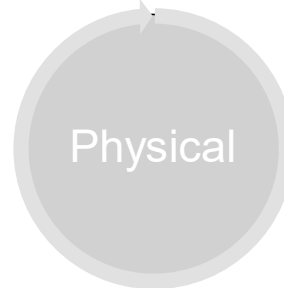
- Advocate for self-care at work to
nurture a culture of healthy helper
- Foster climate of self-care at home
and in relationships

Self Care Basics: Planning



Previous successful coping tools? New tools to add?

Self Care Basics: Planning



What can people do to take care of their PHYSICAL well-being?
Previous successful coping tools? New tools to add?

Self Care Basics: Planning



What can people do to take care of their PHYSICAL well-being?
Previous successful coping tools? New tools to add?

Self Care Basics: Planning



What can people do to take care of their PHYSICAL well-being?
Previous successful coping tools? New tools to add?

Serenity Prayer Reminder

**“...to Accept the Things I Cannot
Change...”**

**“...Courage to Change the Things I
can...”**

Questions?

Suggestions?

Comments?

EVALUATION LINK

**[https://www.seaetc.com/evaluation/evaluation2.html
?ER_ID=62559&Ev_Type=1](https://www.seaetc.com/evaluation/evaluation2.html?ER_ID=62559&Ev_Type=1)**

We Will Survive!

Thank You!

- Jim